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City of Milwaukee Health Department Partners with UWM to Honor World AIDS Day---Dec. 1

***Building awareness through a day of education, testimonials, free
health literature and film***

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) joins the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) and partners across the nation in recognizing December 1, 2006 as World AIDS Day. The purpose of this day is to encourage public support and programming that will prevent the spread of HIV infection, provide awareness and education about HIV and AIDS; and demonstrate compassion for those infected and affected by HIV.

The 2006 World AIDS Day theme is "Stop AIDS. Keep the Promise". This slogan makes an appeal to all of us to become involved in the fight against AIDS, by ensuring that there is a continued commitment to deliver HIV prevention, services and care to those affected in our own community and around the world.

"AIDS continues to be a disease that disproportionately impacts residents of our city," said Commissioner of Health Bevan K. Baker. "It is appropriate that we are partnering with an organization whose mission is education to raise awareness in our community about HIV infection and AIDS."

On Thursday, November 30, the MHD and multiple UWM campus entities including the LGBT Resource Center, LINKS Peer Outreach and Mentoring Center, Norris Student Health Center Peer Health Advocates, the Women's Resource Center, VOX student organization/Planned Parenthood of WI and the MHD's No Condom? No Way! campaign will be in the Union Concourse from 10am-4pm.

"There are so many myths and fears surrounding HIV and AIDS that people lose the message," said Mary Snowden, UWM Assistant Manager of Sociocultural Programming. "The most important aspect we hope to accomplish from our program is awareness and prevention."

The Union Concourse is located in the Student Union (street level), 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd. These organizations have collaborated to create educational displays that focus on

HIV/AIDS from local, national and global perspectives. Safer sex materials (free condoms) will be available, courtesy of ARCW, No Condom? No Way! and VOX student organization/Planned Parenthood of WI.

Also in recognition of World AIDS Day, UWM Union Sociocultural Programming is sponsoring *25 Years of Living with AIDS: 1 Day of Education* on the campus of UWM, from 10am to 3pm. The majority of the events will take place in the Multicultural Student Lounge, which is located in Room 198 of the student union (campus level), 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd. The distribution of awareness ribbons, literature and condoms will take place in the atrium of the building. This Day of Education will consist of film, art, displays and discussions led by individuals who are combating the spread of HIV/AIDS through education. Two documentaries, *Blood Lines* and *Five Heroes of AIDS in Africa*, will be shown and discussed during the course of the day.

In 2006 it is estimated that the number of people living with HIV in the United States will exceed one million for the first time. Here in Wisconsin, between 1982 and 2006 9,229 individuals were reported as HIV positive. One half of all the reported HIV/ AIDS cases in the State of Wisconsin are to City of Milwaukee residents.

The face of the HIV/ AIDS epidemic has changed dramatically over the past decade. It is now more prevalent among African Americans (over 50% of new HIV diagnoses in recent years have been among African Americans) and is now affecting much greater numbers of women (African American women account for up to 72% of new diagnoses in all US women).

For men, and African American men specifically, the vast majority of HIV infections come as a result of contaminated needles during drug use, and from sex with other men. Among women, heterosexual intercourse is the leading cause of infection, and there are strong indications that the main risk factor for many women is undisclosed sexual behavior on the part of their male partners.

Complicating these issues is the fact that 25% of people infected with HIV don't know it, underscoring the need to reach people at risk, providing them with opportunities for HIV testing and access to prevention services and programs.

The first cases of AIDS were diagnosed and reported in 1981. Since then HIV infection around the world has grown to pandemic proportions. Globally, HIV infected 65 million people and caused 25 million deaths. Many lessons have been learned since the first World AIDS Day 19 years ago. Far more energy needs to be invested in generating greater public awareness of, and engagement with this problem, if we are to keep our promise to stop AIDS.

The MHD works to reduce HIV and AIDS in our city through a number of programs including screening for sexually transmitted diseases, counseling and testing for HIV infection, case management to women and children infected with HIV, condom distribution and community education. Free and confidential HIV testing on a walk-in or appointment basis is available at the Keenan Central Health Clinic, and by appointment at the Southside Health Center (1639 S. 23rd Street).

For clinic hours, call 414-286-3631 or visit us online at www.milwaukee.gov/health